



Permanent Mission of
Malaysia
to the United Nations

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STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE SENATOR SYED ALI AL-HABSHEE, REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA ON AGENDA ITEM 38: 'PERMANENT SOVEREIGNTY OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM, AND OF THE ARAB POPULATION IN THE OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN OVER THEIR NATURAL RESOURCES', AT THE 63RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, NEW YORK, 20 OCTOBER 2008.

Thank you, Madam Chair,

We thank the Secretary-General and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for the report presented.

Madam Chair,

2. The report certainly makes grim reading, made worse by the length of the period in which these people have suffered the depth of their suffering and the lack of resolution to the conflict in the near future.

3. The report points to the reduction in the number of Palestinians killed as a result of the conflict from 678 in 2006 to 396 in 2007. However, as members of a common humanity, we must believe that one innocent life lost is one too many. Beyond the number of those killed, Malaysia is also greatly concerned at some of the issues highlighted in the report:

- 3.1 First, according to Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), 83 inhabited residential structures were demolished between February and December 2007. This resulted in the displacement of more than 611 Palestinians, including 235 children;
- 3.2 Second, water supply in the occupied Palestinian territories and Gaza strip are far below the minimum standards recommended by the World Health Organization;
- 3.3 Third, individual acts of wanton cruelty continue unabated. The vandalising of an UNRWA school by two Israeli tanks, including the act of urinating and defecating in the classrooms by Israeli soldiers is one example out of many; and
- 3.4 Fourth, mobility restriction and closure policies by the Israel armed forces continues to impede the normal economic activities of the Palestinian people as well as the population of the occupied Syrian-Golan.

4. However, the present behaviour of the Israel, the occupying power is hardly surprising, given its history of brutal oppression of those under its occupation and its lack of respect for the norms, customs and laws governing civilised states. Israel's flagrant violations include among others:

- 4.1 The Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 as well as its Additional Protocol;
- 4.2 U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967; and
- 4.3 U.N. Security Council Resolution 338 of October 22, 1973.

5. Further, the occupying power has continued to restrict the movement of humanitarian workers, thus denying those most in need the most basic assistance. Malaysia urges Israel to respect, fulfil and give effect to all the relevant provisions of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and Security Council as well those of international human rights and humanitarian law.

Madam Chair,

6. The international community has been rightly transfixed by the food, fuel and financial crisis. Indeed, it should be noted that owing to the policies of the occupying power, those in the occupied territories had suffered from the shortage of these essential items long before this and will suffer even more in the near future. As matters stand:

- 6.1 The number of people dependant on UNRWA for basic food increased from 63 percent in 2006 to 80 percent in 2007;
- 6.2 The shortage of fuel and electricity has resulted into electricity cuts of between 8 to 10 hours a day. This inevitably has worsened health-care services both in Palestine as well as in the occupied Syrian Golan which is already on the verge of collapse.

7. Further, according to the World Food Programme there is currently a severe shortage of food in the occupied Palestinian territory. More aid is needed to prevent a humanitarian crisis. In Gaza, around 302,000 people are suffering from food shortage. Nearly 70 percent out of a population of 1.5 million people live on less than 250 dollars a month. Dependent on aid as they are, it is likely that they will suffer even more next year, given the anticipated fall in ODA levels, as donors struggle to contain the effects of the financial crisis.

8. At the same time, those in the occupied Palestinian territory have not been able to benefit from the increase in food prices, in particular through the export of olive oil. They have not been able to do so due to the restrictions imposed by Israel and its Defence Force, including the building of the illegal Wall and the uprooting of olive trees, which play an important role in the Palestinian economy. It is estimated that the olive industry contributes over 123 million dollars to the West Bank economy. Half of the population is likely to participate at the olive harvest in October

and November 2008. It is heart wrenching to note that during the 2006/2007 year harvest, 7,000 tonnes of olive oil worth 28 million dollars went unsold.

9. For this reason and many others, Israel must respect the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice of 2004 which called on Israel to cease construction of the Wall in and around East Jerusalem and provide reparations for any damage caused to the Palestinians.

Madam Chair,

10. Palestinians as well as the population of the occupied Syrian Golan face continuous hardship despite the tireless efforts by the international community to bring peace and stability in the region. Malaysia firmly believes that these efforts and resolutions are not sufficient. What is needed is a strong and sincere commitment by all parties involved in this conflict to:

- 10.1 First, to provide a long lasting solution for the ongoing conflict;
- 10.2 Second, recognise the population's right to their own natural resources and lift all restrictions of movement and accessibility; and
- 10.3 Third, provide more assistance in creating economic activities and development programmes.

Thank you.

